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COMMITTEE ON IMAGERY REQUIREMENTS AND EXPLOITATION

5 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Reconnaissance Office

SUBJECT : COMIREX Guidance for NRP Planning

REFERENCES : a. DNRO Memorandum for the Chairman,  
COMIREX, 21 May 1973/

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b. DNRO Memorandum for the Chairman,  
USIB, 8 November 1972/  
(USIB-D-46.4/51, 14 November 1972)

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1. This memorandum responds to your request (reference a.)  
for a review of the requirements for photographic coverage and the  
identification at this time of any revision to existing guidance to allow  
development of various launch rate and planning options for presentation  
to the July 1973 NRP Executive Committee session.

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WARNING NOTICE  
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES  
AND METHODS INVOLVED

NRO review(s) completed.

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3. The basis for our response has been well established over the past several months. As you know, COMIREX has had under way for a number of months, and has nearly completed, the development of consolidated guidance on imagery requirements which projects in a current context and in some detail the various needs for broad area search and target surveillance imagery, together with guidance on systems mix and related operational factors. The new comprehensive guidance will update and supersede separate elements of community standing guidance and requirements provided at various times in the past and currently still of record. The re-structuring and consolidation of the requirements into functional-category/problem-oriented sets, against which various imagery collection assets can be directed, will permit still greater efficiency in the application of collection resources.

4. Much of this consolidation and review activity has been directed toward your suggestion (reference b.) that, to the degree feasible, photographic intelligence requirements should be projected on a system-independent basis. The NRO has been in close touch with this activity as it has proceeded, and it is recommended that the draft guidance developed to date be drawn upon to amplify and augment the summary points addressed in the present response. Pending completion and formal USIB approval of the new consolidated guidance document, the Committee's summary conclusions in paragraph 7, below, are focused specifically on your request (reference a.) and are provided as interim guidance to assist the NRO in developing appropriate program proposals for presentation to the July 1973 ExCom.

5. It is recognized that there are a number of interacting factors to be considered in developing such programs. Some of these relate to, and flow from, the various types of intelligence problems, needs, and requirements which satellite imagery is designed to satisfy; others relate to, or flow from, operational, system hardware, or fiscal aspects. While COMIREX has focused its review on the factors in the former group, it has also been necessary to consider and comment on the latter aspects. The overall objective continues to be, as in the past, to strike a reasonable balance between satisfaction of intelligence needs, technological and operational possibilities, and related costs.

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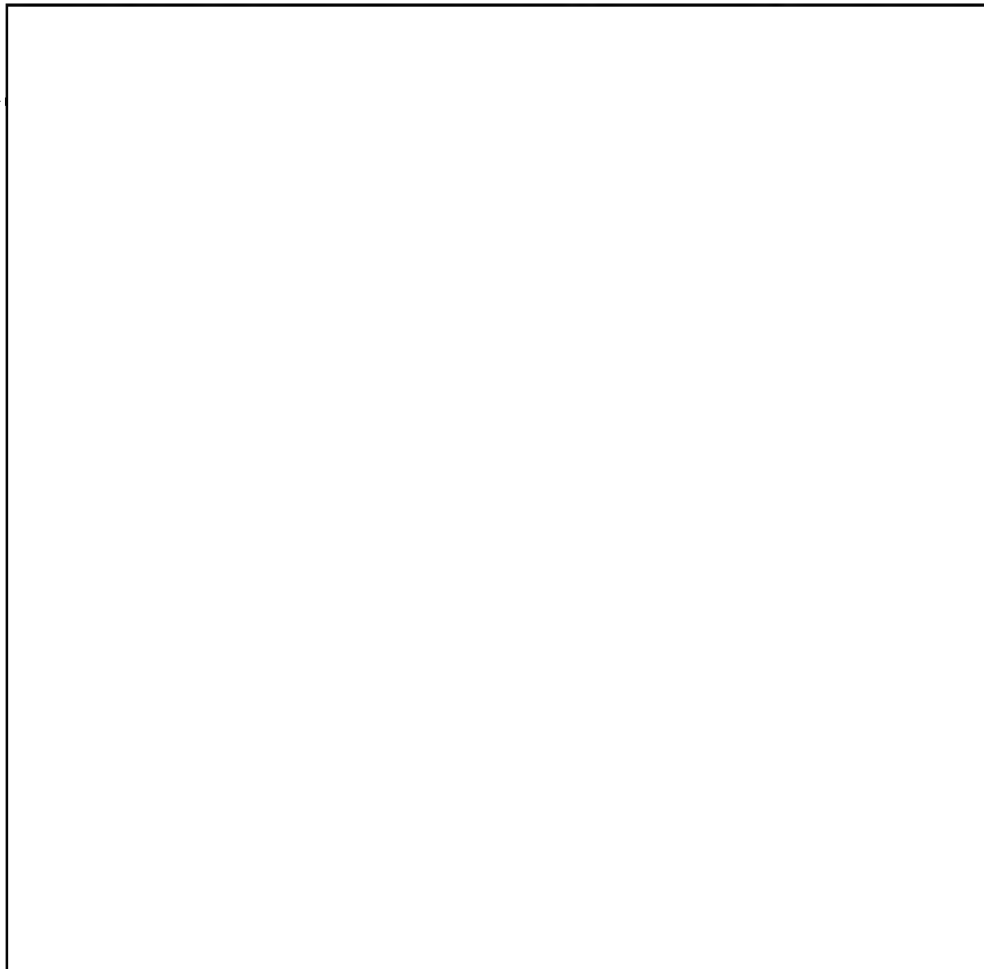
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6. A report containing background data and supporting analyses has been prepared, and will be issued as a follow-up to this memorandum. It provides additional detail concerning experience to date, the relative weight of certain factors, and the relative importance of interaction among factors.

7. The Committee's summary conclusions below address the various aspects which the NRO indicated were relevant to its present review of planning options.



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will overlap significantly in on-orbit coverage at the expense of a significant subsequent gap in continuity of coverage from any system.

d. Interleaving. The combination of desire for continuity, mutual support, and avoidance of overlap generally lead to a natural progression of interleaved launches. However, interleaving has diminishing importance as an independent factor affecting launch scheduling. If schedule adherence can be maintained, a planned program of interleaved launches appears optimum. Interleaving of launches should not be allowed to cause accumulated slippage from one system to the other.

e. Slippage. Adherence to schedule is a factor of major importance. Slippages in launches of one type system should not be allowed to have an accumulated impact on the launches of the other type system. While in many respects it is difficult to "make up" coverage which was not obtained, continuity is essential to regularity and even spacing of collection.

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We reaffirm, therefore, the previous USIB guidance that no single substantive intelligence category of requirements should establish the size and launch rates for the program. Should the NRO identify any category where fulfillment of the requirement might call for a level of operations disproportionate to other categories, it should so inform COMIREX. The Committee will evaluate the priority of this category in relation to others and the costs involved, and provide additional guidance. In general, launch rate planning should be based on consideration of all related factors. Within such established rates the collection systems should then be applied intensively, when applicable, against the specialized needs reflected in the high periodicity targets. Targets or areas in these categories will continue to be specified for directed coverage on a mission-by-mission or intramission basis.

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Chairman

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